

## **U.S. Consulate General Guayaquil Disposition of Remains Report**

Various area mortuaries were surveyed in order to compile this data. The Technical Health Inspector of the National Health Service (Inspector Técnico de Sanidad, Servicio Sanitario Nacional) of each province controls the burial, embalming, preparation for shipment, and exhumation of remains of deceased persons. Regulations regarding disposition of remains are contained in Decision No. 3463 of the Ministry of Public Health of Ecuador, dated July 3, 1974, Official Registry No. 597, published on July 17, 1974. Its scope is nationwide.

### **U.S. Consulate Information**

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[Country Specific Information - Ecuador](#)

[Safety and Security: Register with the U.S. Consulate General in Guayaquil](#)

### **Profile of Religions of the Host Country and Religious Services available to visitors.**

**A. Country Profile:** 95 percent of Ecuadorians are Roman Catholics. The Evangelical Missionary Union represents many Protestants (4 percent of the population) in Ecuador. Anglican churches in Ecuador belong to the Province 9 of the Episcopal Church in the United States. Other religions are present in small numbers: Eastern Orthodoxy, Mormonism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam.

#### **B. Religious Activities for Visitors:**

1. Roman Catholic Church:

- [Archdiocese of Guayaquil](#)
- [Archdiocese of Cuenca](#)

2. Jewish Community: <http://godaven.com/detail.asp?Id=17021>

3. Jehovah's Witnesses: <http://www.jw.org/es/testigos-de-jehov%C3%A1/oficinas/ecuador/>

4. Mormon Church: <https://www.lds.org/church/temples/guayaquil-ecuador?lang=eng>

5. Islam: <http://www.centroislamico.org/contacto>

6. Protestant Church: <http://www.iglesialuterana.ec/>

#### **Part IV. Funeral Directors, Mortician and Related Services Available in Ecuador:**

**DISCLAIMER:** The U.S. Consulate in Guayaquil assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following persons or firms. Names are listed in no specific order. Professional credentials and areas of expertise are provided directly by the funeral directors, morticians and other service providers.

To see a copy of Guayaquil's district funeral homes, please click [here](#).

#### **Profile of Services available in Ecuador regarding preparation and shipment of remains:**

##### **A. Disposition of Remains (general)**

Remains in Ecuador may be buried, cremated or exhumed. Family members need to select a funeral home in country to help carry out their instructions. Funeral homes will also assist in obtaining the appropriate paperwork in cases when the family wishes to repatriate the remains to the United States.

Morgue availability and capacity in cities other than Guayaquil, Cuenca, Manta, and Quito is very limited. When a death occurs in a place where there are no morgue services available, the Ecuadorian National Police will issue a report called "levantamiento del cadaver", after which a funeral home would be able to transport the remains to the closest city with morgue capabilities.

##### **B. Embalming Facts**

The average cost of embalming in Ecuador is \$500. Embalming can only be performed by medical personnel assigned to the morgue of the National Police. Funeral homes are not accredited by local authorities to perform embalming. Most funeral homes, therefore, use formol injections to preserve the remains.

##### **C. Requirements for deaths by infectious disease or under suspicious circumstances**

Ecuadorian law provides that all deaths caused by non-natural or violent causes should be accompanied by an autopsy report, detailing the cause of the death.

##### **D. Shipping**

Cargo space availability and fares are independently established by the different carriers. When arranging shipment of remains to the United States, it is key to ensure that there is

space available to fit a coffin in a particular flight. Urns containing ashes are rather easily accommodated.

Shipping arrangements must be made through an Ecuadorian shipping agency. You can find a list of shipping agencies in Ecuador at [http://www.carga.com/new/ecuador\\_en.html](http://www.carga.com/new/ecuador_en.html). Local funeral home providers are familiar with this process and may advise you as well.

E. Local authorities responsible for licensing funeral directors and morticians

In order to legally operate in Ecuador, funeral homes must obtain permissions from the Ecuadorian Health Ministry, the Ecuadorian Fire Department, and the local City Hall.

F. Local authorities responsible for making findings regarding the cause of death and for issuing death local certificates

In order to register a death in Ecuador, the next of kin or funeral home representative must obtain, from the treating doctor at the hospital, or from the legal doctor who performed the autopsy, a document called “Informe Estadístico de Defunción”. This no-fee document, which indicates the deceased biographic data and cause of death, must be taken to the Civil Registry authorities for permanent filing and for issuance of the Ecuadorian death certificate.

Ecuadorian death certificates can only be issued by the authorities of the Civil Registry in the location where the death took place, or by the National Civil Registry in Quito, where all major life events are collected nationwide.

For further information about the Ecuadorian registration process, and to see the list of Civil Registry offices, please click [here](#).

1. MAXIMUM PERIOD BEFORE BURIAL

- a) When body embalmed: Law stipulates that burial be effected within 36 hours of death. In practice, disposition of embalmed remains sometimes remains pending up to six days. If putrefaction is present, burial must be immediate.
- b) When body is not embalmed: Burial must be made within 24 hours of death, according to local law. However, in practice, burial is sometimes delayed as much as 36 hours.

2. EMBALMING

Embalming is done by the Forensic Institute and private physicians. Funeral homes do not embalm. Accreditation for embalming must be authorized by the Jefatura Provincial de Salud (Province Public Health Director). The normal practice in Guayaquil, however, is not to embalm, but merely to inject the cadaver with formol.

3. CREMATION

Local laws permit cremation of bodies and cremation is approved by the Public Health Director in Guayaquil. Cremation facilities have been available in Guayaquil since January 1987. Cremation services are provided only by “Jardines de la Esperanza” and “Junta de Beneficencia” funeral homes.

4. CASKETS AND CONTAINERS

Funeral homes are aware of and use containers which meet all the requirements of the local health authorities. Bodies are not allowed to be exported unless they are embalmed. Sealed caskets made in Ecuador are for one time use; air-tight metal containers can be made locally.

5. EXPORTATION OF HUMAN REMAINS

Local requirements (Death by non-contagious disease only)

- a) Official death certificate obtained from the Ecuadorian Civil Registry offices
- b) Next of kin's consent for exportation of remains (this document may be obtained from the Ecuadorian consulate closest to next of kin's residence, or from the U.S. Consulate General office in Guayaquil)
- c) Certificate from embalmer
- d) Inspection certificate from health authorities covering embalming, packing and preparation for shipment
- e) Permit to transport and export body issued by health authorities
- f) Notation at the Civil Registry regarding removal of body is made at the port of shipment (Quito or Guayaquil)
- g) Customs inspection of shipment and seal on box to the effect that the box contains nothing but the remains of the deceased.

EXPORTATION OF HUMAN ASHES: (a), (b), (d), (e), (f) as above, plus cremation certificate

6. COSTS

a) Estimated cost of local burial:

In Guayaquil, including rental of grave for four years	<b>\$ 1,780</b>
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The purchase price of a burial plot plus burial cost (coffin and funeral services)	<b>\$ 3,850</b>
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b) Estimated cost of preparation or remains for shipment:

Embalming (on average)	\$ 500
Preparation for shipment (packing, documents, transportation, etc.)	800
Container (metal coffin and outer container case)	600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,900</b>

c) Estimated cost for cremation:

Cremation, urn and transportation to facilities	\$ 1,350
Cremation permits for exportation	500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,850</b>

(Average weight of urn containing ashes is 5.00 kilos)

d) Transportation cost for remains (per kilo):

From Guayaquil to New York (East Coast)	\$ 5.25
From Guayaquil to Washington, D.C.	6.00
From Guayaquil to Seattle (West Coast)	7.46
From Guayaquil to Dallas	6.05
From Guayaquil to San Francisco	7.62
From Guayaquil to Los Angeles	6.00
From Guayaquil to Chicago (Mid West)	4.00
From Guayaquil to Miami	5.63
From Guayaquil to Puerto Rico	4.50

Additional costs to be included:

- Fuel	\$0.45/Kg (minimum fee \$15.00)
- Security	\$0.10/Kg (minimum fee \$15.00)
- Airway bill	\$15.00
- Shipping agency fee	\$120.00

Estimated TOTAL Transportation Cost by Air

(Preparation and transportation based on a total shipment weight of 200 Kg, additional minimum charges may also apply)

From Guayaquil to New York (East Coast)	\$ 1,295
From Guayaquil to Washington D.C.	\$ 1,445
From Guayaquil to Seattle (West Coast)	\$ 1,737
From Guayaquil to Dallas	\$ 1,455
From Guayaquil to San Francisco	\$ 1,769
From Guayaquil to Los Angeles	\$ 1,445
From Guayaquil to Chicago (Mid West)	\$ 1,045
From Guayaquil to Miami	\$ 1,371
From Guayaquil to Puerto Rico	\$ 1,145

**Note:** When death occurs in the interior of Ecuador, the remains may be transferred to Guayaquil for preparation and shipment. Transportation is done by ambulance or by air. Transportation costs from the major cities of our Consular District to Guayaquil are **\$600** on average.

7. EXHUMATION AND SHIPMENT

Regulations governing exhumation of remains state it may be done only after a minimum period of four years.

Estimated cost of disinterment and shipment:

- Preparation of remains for shipment and paperwork	\$600.00
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- Coffin and outer container \$500.00
- Plus cost of transportation  
(estimated weight of container approximately 50 Kg)

8. AUTOPSIES:

Ecuadorian law provides that all deaths caused by non-natural, unknown or suspicious causes should be accompanied by an autopsy report, detailing the cause of the death. In Ecuador, autopsies can only be performed by the forensic department of the Ecuadorian National Police.

9. LOCAL CUSTOMS REGARDING FUNERALS, DISPOSITION OF REMAINS, MOURNING, MEMORIAL SERVICES

If the deceased's next of kin is not present to personally arrange for disposition of the remains, then he or she will need to execute a power of attorney document naming a local agent (usually a funeral home) for this purpose. Per Ecuadorian regulations, the power of attorney should be signed, notarized, apostilled, and then sent to the next of kin's agent.

An "apostille" is a certificate issued to authenticate a notary's signature and seal. In the United States, the Secretary of State of the state where a document was notarized should normally provide the apostille. The following webpage contains a full list of competent authorities that can provide apostilles in the United States:

<https://www.hcch.net/en/states/authorities/details3/?aid=353>.

Although obtaining the apostille can be a time-consuming administrative task, Ecuadorian authorities typically require this formality in order for the remains to be released to a representative.